

Global Migration Discussion Questions

1. How does migration from the Middle East or Central America become a global concern? What are the major issues that arise from these migrations affect global foreign policy?
2. What are the most pressing reasons that migration occurs today? (Relate your responses to the handout that charts out varying motivations for migrants.) Do you expect the current global migration patterns to extend into the near term versus long term future? Why or why not?
3. What steps are agencies of the United Nations or intergovernmental agreements such as the Global Compact on Refugees or the Global Compact on Migration taking to ameliorate issues that migration causes? How effective are these Compacts? What benefits do they bring to both migrants and the countries in which they temporarily or permanently resettle?
4. Europe has experienced high levels of migration throughout history. But what was unique about the issues associated with large inflows of migrants in 2015?
5. How do economic, political and cultural issues surrounding migration affect the ways that host countries are able to assimilate migrants? Can you separate the emotional versus rational arguments for and against migration?
6. To what extent is migration associated with terrorism? How can host countries take steps to balance the humanitarian goal of providing safe havens for asylum seeking refugees and the possible threat of terrorism?

Middle East Discussion Questions

1. Saudi Arabia and Iran are both governed by quasi fundamentalist Islamic regimes. Both are major global suppliers of petroleum. Yet both have been regional trouble makers (e.g. support for opposing factions in Yemen, Syria and elsewhere.) At various points in history, both have been strong allies of the USA. Given the goals and governing practices of today's leaders as well as likely leaders in the near-term future in each of these countries, which of the two would be a better long-term ally? What are the pros and cons?
2. As long as there were security reasons to do so, the US has backed autocrats in most of the nations of the Middle East. Should the US change course and give higher priority to human rights and democracy than in the past?
3. Do you think that the US decision to pull out of the Iran nuclear deal and to reimpose sanctions was a good or bad foreign policy move? Why?
4. Why are there so many failed states in the Middle East? Is this reason an exception? (When answering this question, consider the region's age old tradition of tribalism.)
5. The borders of several countries in the Middle East were drawn by European powers after the fall of the Ottoman Empire. Do these borders still make sense or should some of them be redrawn? What are the pros and cons? (For example, consider the strife between the Turks and the Kurds.)
6. Did the US make a correct decision when it decided to move its Embassy in Israel to Jerusalem? How did that policy affect foreign policy options in the region and globally?

Nuclear Negotiations Discussion Questions

1. What are the political factors driving nuclear production and negotiations today? Why are nuclear weapons still produced if there are treaties and agreement in place not to utilize them?
2. What are the five nuclear races in the past and present? Fill in the blanks on the handout. What was different about each of them? How have nuclear agreements impacted negotiations in the past? How has this activity changed under the Trump administration?
3. How can past strategies inform the current goal of disarming North Korea's nuclear arsenal? How has the evolution of nuclear negotiations during the 20th century influence the current negotiations to lessen nuclear threats globally?
4. President Trump has proposed a Space Force as a new branch of the Armed Forces. How would its creation impact nuclear negotiations? Would it increase security against nuclear attacks? Why or why not?
5. Do you think that a nuclear free world might be a possibility? Why or why not?
6. What will nuclear negotiations look like in the future?

European Populism and Nationalism Discussion Questions

1. What is the current nature of populism in Europe? What are the leanings of the populist political groups in Europe? Are they all right of center? (See handout.) Is the current wave of populism just a trend or is it here to stay?
2. What are the underlying causes of the recent wave of European populism? To what extent is it related to economic inequality (some of which stems from the aftermath of the 2007-2009 global recession) versus migrants, asylum-seekers and refugees? How can other world regions prevent similar backlashes when faced with wide-scale migration?
3. What role could the European Union play to dissipate tensions brought on by populism?
4. What similarities and differences can you see between populist parties in different European countries such as France, Sweden, Hungary etc.?
5. What are some of the ways that the rise of populism in Europe affects the world?
6. How can pro and anti-immigration groups find common ground in a period of high demand among migrants to be accepted as new settlers in various European countries? Do your suggestions have broader implications for policies that might be followed elsewhere in the world when faced when a country or region is faced with sudden increases in immigrants? Explain.

Trade with China Discussion Questions

1. How important is the USA's two-way trade with China to the overall economic welfare of the USA and its residents? Which industries are most affected? What is the impact on consumers in both the USA and China?
2. According to the video and the article in the Great Decisions book, the method used to record international trade flows is outmoded and based on nineteenth century assumptions (e.g. a conceptual limitation of David Ricardo's theory of comparative advantage that inputs for exported products are sourced entirely from the country in which final products are assembled.) In light of global value chain sourcing practices by globally oriented and multinational firms, should the method of data collection be changed to a value-added approach (currently practiced by a handful of smaller country statistical data preparation groups)? What does China really contribute to the overall value chain of high-tech companies like Apple and Dell? Are trade deficits with other Asian and European countries understated and is the trade deficit with China overstated? On the other hand, are exports to China from major manufacturers like Caterpillar and Boeing overstated in terms of the value added in their US production facilities?
3. Some imports from China have been found to be defective or unsafe with respect to health standards? What steps can the US government and/or private sector take to protect US consumers from the deficiencies of these Chinese exports?
4. What is the current status of trade negotiations between the USA and China? Do you think that a trade war might happen? Why or why not? If a trade war were to take place, what would be its potential impact on the US and Chinese economies including workers and consumers? What would be the ramifications for the multilateral global trade regime under the auspices of the World Trade Organization?
5. How would the outcome of the current trade negotiations between the USA and China affect the overall political and cultural relationship between the two countries? Could it have a positive or negative rollover effect on foreign policy relations with other nations?
6. China has a very high level of unfavorable emissions. Should a revised trade pact between the two nations address climate change and other environmental issues? How?

Cyber Conflict Discussion Questions

1. What do you think of the analogy of the current level of stolen cyber technology by the Chinese and others with the theft of railroad technology from the British by Germans and other central and Eastern European countries in the late 19th century? What do you think about the analogies that economic, military and political strength of countries comes from technologies (e.g. sea power of countries with Atlantic coast ports in the 16th and 17th centuries, land power from those possessing railroad power in the 19th century and global power from those possessing advanced cyber power in the 21st century)? See the attached graphic.
2. On an earlier topic, you discussed the Trump proposal for a Space Force to be added as a separate branch of the US Armed Forces. Would this proposed new military branch help protect US cyber security? Why or why not?
3. Various nations have used cyberspace to hack into US social media or corporate databases. What are the differences in motivations for doing so by the Russians, the North Koreans and the Chinese?
4. How does China/US economic ties affect their relationship with respect to cyber politics? Can the US afford to stop Chinese cyber espionage and face economic consequences? Explain.
5. How could cyber conflict and cyber advances affect regional or global military conflicts? Suggest ways that cyber conflict could be used by a country to get “its way” (including the protection of existing geographic territory or addition of geographic territory.)
6. How could cyber hacking in the future impact governments, companies and private individuals? What steps can be taken to minimize the negative impacts of such hacking practices?

USA and Mexico Relations Discussion Questions

1. Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador has recently been inaugurated as Mexico's president. How will his policies affecting relationships with the USA differ from those of his predecessors? How will those policies interact with those of the Trump Administration? (Think beyond the controversy concerning the border wall.)
2. Starting with the Bracero program, several programs have impacted the relationship between the US and Mexico. (See the list on the handout.) Which of these have had the most significant impact on the current political and cultural relationship between the US and Mexico? Why?
3. NAFTA was recently renegotiated. The name of the agreement was changed to the United States Mexico Canada Agreement (USMCA.) Although it was approved by all three heads of government, it may still be awaiting approval by the US Congress. What are the major changes in the provisions of the agreement? (For example, consider local content requirements.) What are the pros and cons of these changes?
4. Immigration is portrayed in the media as the center of the US/Mexico relationship. Do you agree? Why or why not? What other issues should also be dominant concerns?
5. The war on drugs has also been a major concern of both governments. What steps has each taken to lessen the international flow of illegal drugs? What further steps should each nation take?
6. Going beyond immigration and drugs, what further steps should the current and future administrations in Washington and Mexico City take to enhance and strengthen the bilateral relationship between the US and Mexico?

The State Department and American Diplomacy Discussion Questions

1. What do you perceive to be the unique role of the State Department and its diplomatic role in American foreign policy? What are the benefits of the State Department to you as an American citizen?
2. The Trump Administration sought to reduce the State Department's budget by one-third. Why did the Trump Administration make the proposal? What would have been the impact had the proposal succeeded?
3. What do you perceive to be the roles played by career foreign service officers? How important are these career civil servants to individual citizens so that the jobs of these foreign service officers should be protected? How do these officers add to or complement the roles of political appointees in leadership positions in the State Department? How does the purpose and role of the State Department complement other governmental bodies such as the National Security Council, the CIA and the military?
4. As the focus on terrorism gives way to a return to great power rivalry with China and Russia, what kind of diplomatic assets will the US need around the world to be effective?
5. Is the US entering an era when it needs a stronger focus on diplomacy to go along with its emphasis on military power since 9/11? Explain
6. The US and other nations are facing common transnational issues such as climate change, drug and crime cartels, global health, reduction of poverty and the rising importance of women in business and government. How can the US use its diplomatic power to push these advances forward and to make the world more stable, just and peaceful?

See the attached handout for additional questions.